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The Declining Standards of Arabic-to-Roman Transliteration in Academic Writing, Editing, and Publishing

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Abstract Academic publications in Islamic and Near Eastern studies make use of transliteration systems to render words from the Arabic script into the Roman script; this process is also called Romanization (from Arabic). Accuracy in the application of these transliteration systems has long been an essential characteristic of rigorous scholarship. However, the standards of transliteration in academic writing, editing, and publishing have been gradually declining, to the extent that some of the relatively recent scholarly monographs in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies, that have been considered to be ground-breaking and trend-setting, have featured fundamental and embarrassing errors in transliteration—errors that cannot be attributed to typographical carelessness alone. This decline has now seeped into the world of journalism as well. This paper will address issues in Arabic-to-Roman transliteration. It will also document some prominent cases that demonstrate the decline in standards. It will end with recommendations for authors, editors, and publishers, in whose interest it is to ensure the quality of transliteration.

Keywords Transliteration · Romanization · Arabic script · Roman script · Islamic studies

Academic publications[1] in the English language in Islamic and Near Eastern studies make use of transliteration systems in order to render words from the Arabic script

[1] I use the adjective "academic" on purpose, in order to distinguish academic writing and editing from scholarly writing and editing. While academic writing/editing points toward material that is published on

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into the Latin/Roman script. This is also called Romanization (from Arabic). Transliteration serves a crucial function in academic publications (monographs, anthologies, journals, etc.). It allows the author to refer to a concept without reducing its meaning through translation into another language.[2] It also allows the author to distinguish between names that have exactly the same spellings in the Roman script, and are different only in their diacritics (by means of macrons and under-dots, etc.)—names like Ḥāmid/Ḥamīd, Khāliq/Khalīq, and so on. It also helps authors by giving them tools to distinguish between words that, when transliterated, can mean completely different things depending upon how they are transliterated; this is especially true in the case of Semitic languages, in which the presence or absence of a macron or an under-dot is all that is needed to convert one word into another with a completely different meaning.[3] Academics and other authors, especially those who study the humanities and the social sciences, require methods to get their points across effectively. These methods include footnotes/endnotes, glossaries, addenda, and, among many others, transliteration, forming the "scholarly apparatus"[4] of an academic publication. At least as early as 1891 (and probably much earlier than that), we have evidence of people writing about Arabic-to-Latin transliteration issues in well-established and highly reputed academic journals devoted to Islamic and Near Eastern studies;[5] this indicates the importance of this exercise. Transliteration allows authors to be rigorous in presenting their research findings.

Accuracy in the application of different transliteration systems has long been a characteristic of rigorous scholarship,[6] especially in those fields of study that have rich textual traditions, and the academic explorations and studies of which are now published in the *lingua franca* of the academic world, English. However, academic

Footnote 1 continued
a range of issues on different academic fora, and while scholarly writing too points toward the same, the term "scholarly editing" can have a very different connotation, pointing primarily toward the practice of producing critical editions in the humanities. In the humanities, this practice has become so common that there is an academic journal devoted to the study of issues in producing critical editions, *Scholarly Editing*. It is in order to avoid confusion that I have used the adjective "academic" instead of scholarly—what I mean by it is the writing that is published primarily in academic monographs and journals.

[2] See: Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 4.

[3] "To the myopic dotter of i's and crosser of t's, a dot under a consonant or a macron over a vowel are matters of utmost importance. The presence or absence of a dot under the k will distinguish between the word for "heart" and that for "dog""—Carlton S. Coon, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1951), v. This was brought to my attention by: Brinkley Messick, "Notes on Transliteration", in P. Rubel and A. Rosman, eds., *Translating Cultures: Perspectives on Translation and Anthropology* (New York: Berg, 2003), 185.

[4] Messick, "Notes on Transliteration", 182.

[5] For instance: F. W. Newman, "Transliteration", *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (Apr., 1891): 340–343.

[6] This is evident from the innumerable book reviews published in academic journals devoted to Islamic and Middle Eastern studies that either praise the transliteration in the books under review, or, as is more often the case, criticize either the author or the editor or the publisher for not paying attention to mistakes in transliteration. In both cases, it is seldom the case that a review of a book published in these fields will gloss over this aspect of the publication. I have given multiple examples of this later in the article.

publications in the last few years have demonstrated a steep decline in transliteration standards. Considering the actual as well as the symbolic importance of Arabic-to-Roman transliteration in academic publications, this decline is worrisome; this despite the fact that there exist multiple comprehensive transliteration systems from which to choose.

Three Arabic-to-Roman transliteration systems that I find to be in use the most[7] are: the American Library Association-Library of Congress Romanization table;[8] the transliteration system of the E.J. Brill's *Encyclopaedia of Islam*[9]; and the transliteration table of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)*.[10] Many scholars who publish their writings on topics in Islamic and Near Eastern Studies today use one or the other of these three systems, albeit usually with minor modifications.[11] All three systems have at least one feature in common. In fact, all major Arabic-to-Roman transliteration systems that are used in contemporary scholarship possess this feature: they all use the symbol (‘) for the Arabic letter *‘ayn*, and the symbol (’) for the Arabic letter *hamzah*. Since these are two different letters/alphabets in Arabic with different sounds and orthographies, it is essential that they be represented by different Roman symbols. Despite this, one of the most common mistakes observed in contemporary academic publishing is the wrong use of the *‘ayn* (‘) and the *hamzah* (’).

We will now take a look at some representative publications from the field of Islamic studies and observe their treatment of transliteration systems with a special focus on the use—and misuse—of the *‘ayn* (‘) and the *hamzah* (’). It must be stated at the outset and in no uncertain terms that the works being quoted in this section, while chosen to point out transliteration issues, have otherwise been hailed

[7] There are no *scientific* data to verify this. This claim arises simply out of my reading and observation over the years, which, it turns out, is also vouched for by: Messick, 183.

[8] For instance: L. Clarke, ed. & tr., *Shī‘ite Heritage: Essays on Classical and Modern Traditions* (Binghamton, NY: Global Publications, 2001); Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach, eds., *Women, Leadership, and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); James Noyes, *The Politics of Iconoclasm: Religion, Violence and the Culture of Image-Breaking in Christianity and Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

[9] For instance: Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Shihan de Silva Jayasuria and Jean-Pierre Angenot, *Uncovering the History of Africans in Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Nico Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherlands East Indies: A Biography of Sayyid ‘Uthman (1822–1914)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[10] For instance: Elvire Corboz, *Guardians of Shi‘ism: Sacred Authority and Translational Family Networks* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015); Mimi Hanaoka, *Authority and Identity in Medieval Islamic Historiography: Persian Histories from the Peripheries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Karen C. Pinto, *Medieval Islamic Maps: An Exploration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[11] In the world of Urdu studies, the most commonly-used transliteration system seems to be the one designed by the *Annual of Urdu Studies*, a scholarly journal that enjoyed good reputation until it ceased publication in 2014.

as ground-breaking, and have been authored by experts who are extremely well-respected in the academic and scholarly communities.

A 2012 book on shī'ism, titled *Shi'ism*,[12] was received well by critics and scholars. *The New York Review of Books* called it "challenging" and "brilliant".[13] First, the very title of the book uses (') for the *'ayn*, a move that has no precedent in any of the established transliteration systems. And it continues to use (') for the *'ayn* throughout the book consistently. While that may be an argument in and of itself for establishing the validity of this usage, especially within a single book, it does not have any basis in the conventions of Arabic-to-Roman transliteration. What is further confusing is the fact that using the right symbols for the *'ayn* and the *hamzah* would have required exactly the same amount of work as using the wrong ones. In a case like this, using no symbols or diacritics would have been better than using the wrong ones, considering that without the symbols and diacritics at least a general reader would have had an easier reading experience. There seems to be no authorial or editorial gain as a result of this decision.

Moreover, an analysis of the transliterated names and terms within the book reveals even more issues. While the "Note on Transliteration" toward the end of the book claims that its transliteration system "[by] and large…preferred the anglicized versions of common Arabic and Persian names and words",[14] the "Arabic and Persian Glossary" starting on the very next page contains words after words that betray that claim, and in the process also flout popular transliteration conventions—and that too in an inconsistent manner.

For instance, here are three words listed on the first page of the Glossary: *'Adl*; *'alam al-mithal*; and *'aql* .[15] If one were to follow the established conventions of transliteration, the (') in all three cases should have been reversed like this (') to represent the *'ayn*. Even the word "Ka'bah [*sic*]", a place popularly considered to be sacred for Muslims, suffered the same treatment. What is even more troubling: the same symbol that is representing the *'ayn* is also representing the *hamzah*, as in these cases: *awlia'*;[16] *Ghaybah al-Kubra'*; *Ghaybah al-Sughra'*.[17] In an academic monograph where some attempt has been made to introduce sophistication into transliterated terms—with the repeated use of (')—what could be the logic behind retaining the same symbol for two entirely different Arabic characters? As far as I can tell, the book is mute on this question.

A 2016 book on the classical Persian text *Chachnama*[18] received many positive reviews. However, one review did point out various issues in the book, including those of transliteration. Syed Nomanul Haq writes:

[12] Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[13] Malise Ruthven, "The Revolutionary Shias", *New York Review of Books* (Dec. 22, 2011), accessed on Nov. 21, 2017, url: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/12/22/revolutionary-shias/.

[14] Dabashi, *Shi'ism*, 327.

[15] Dabashi, *Shi'ism*, 328.

[16] Dabashi, *Shi'ism*, 329.

[17] Dabashi, *Shi'ism*, 330.

[18] Manan Ahmed Asif, *A Book of Conquest: The* Chachnama *and Muslim Origins in South Asia* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2016).

> While it [the book] announces that in its transliterations the text will retain the *hamza* (apostrophe) and the *'ayn* (reverse apostrophe)—this has turned into a mess. Sometimes these characters are transliterated, at times they are not, and this can happen in the same section; then, there are cases when they are embarrassingly confused in the typescript; and there exist other instances when they are misplaced (ta'rikh is a case in point where the *hamza* keeps changing its place). The famous name Miskawayh appears as "Miskawa", both in the text and in the index. The Persian/Urdu/Arabic word *Rufaqa'* is transliterated as *Rufka*. Irfan Habib and Muhammad Habib seem to have been confused in the index. It also seems that, due to incorrect vocalisation, *malik* is read as *mulk* (the two words being orthographically identical).[19]

The 1996 book *Early Islamic Mysticism*[20] was a trendsetter in the academic study of Sufism. Toward the end of the book there is an entire page dedicated to a chronology of famous Sufis, titled "Chronology of Some Important Figures in the Development of Sufism".[21] Almost one-third of the names on the one-page list have serious transliteration issues and inconsistencies. Here are the relevant cases:

- aṣ-Ṣadiq instead of al-Ṣādiq (or aṣ-Ṣādiq[22])
- al-Ḥarith instead of al-Ḥārith
- 'Abu instead of Abu or 'Abu or Abū or 'Abū[23]
- Ḥamid instead of Ḥāmid[24]
- al-Ghāzalī instead of al-Ghazālī
- Fariduddīn instead of Farīduddīn
- 'Attar instead of 'Aṭṭār

Even a word as important and common as *Sharī'ah*/*Sharī'a* lately has suffered at the hands of the declining standards of transliteration. Even a rough sample of books published on the topic would reveal that they had wrongly used the *hamzah* (') instead of the correct *'ayn* (') in the transliteration—these are books that have, in their titles and on their covers, wrong transliteration, books that have been written by author(s), copyedited and proofread by editor(s), and published many a time by

[19] S. Nomanul Haq, "Gujarati sandals in Baghdad: Decolonising history", *Herald* (Dec. 4, 2016), accessed on Dec. 16, 2016, url: http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153594.

[20] Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004).

[21] Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 321.

[22] This would be a phonetic transliteration of the word, emphasizing the need for pronouncing the word correctly. This would not live up to the principle of *reversibility* that would allow for a word to be converted back into its original script.

[23] 'Abu should either have a *hamzah* (') at the beginning or nothing at all; the 'u' in 'Abu should have a macron, especially when there are other similar cases with macrons appropriately placed.

[24] For someone with ordinary Arabic training, Ḥamid can be read as both Ḥāmid and Ḥamīd, both very popular names in the Islamic world. Without proper diacritics, the name can be misleading.

major and well-established publishing houses.[25] Again, it takes an equal amount of time and effort to type a symbol—be it (’) or (‘). Either a symbol for the *‘ayn* should not be included; or, if a symbol is to be used as a matter of necessity, then it should be the generally agreed-upon symbol (‘). The issue becomes even more sensitive when one discovers that one of the most well-respected historians of Islam, Marshall G.S. Hodgson, in his classic three-volume study of Islamic history titled *The Venture of Islam*,[26] discusses this exact word (*Sharī‘a*) as a special case in the context of the transliteration scheme that he employed throughout his own work.

Hodgson’s *Venture of Islam* contains arguably the most comprehensive treatment of the issue of transliteration from Islamicate languages—especially those that follow the Arabic script (Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Urdu)—into the Roman script.[27] He begins his discussion by highlighting the importance of a transliteration system. According to Hodgson:

> Outside of a very narrow subspecialty in which he has full first-hand acquaintance, even the Arabist or Persianist will come across names first in secondary works, commonly in a Western language; yet he will want to know the original. Without diacritics he cannot distinguish *‘Âlî* from *‘Alî*, *Ḥâkim* from *Ḥakîm*, *ẓâhir* from *zâhir*, *‘Âmir* from *Amîr*.[28]

After discussing the importance of transliteration systems and their general features, he launches into a criticism of some of the then-prevalent transliteration practices and proceeds on to introducing the reader to the transliteration system that he employs in his own work. According to him, the three “practical requirements” of an accurate and functioning transliteration system are:

> *written reversibility*, that is, one should be able to reconstruct the original written form from the transliterated form; *oral recognizability*, that is, the reader’s pronunciation should be well enough guided to allow oral recognition by someone who pronounces properly; and *resistance to accident*, that is, if diacritics are changed or lost, either by chance or for economy, confusion should remain minimal.[29]

[25] These publications feature the wrong symbol for the *‘ayn* in *Shari‘ah*, not just in the titles of the publications but also throughout their texts: Humayon A. Dar & Umar F. Moghul, eds., *The Chancellor guide to the legal and Shari’a aspects of Islamic finance* (London: Chancellor Publications, 2009); Rex Ahdar & Nicholas Aroney, eds., *Shari’a in the West* (Oxford University Press, 2010); Bryan S. Turner, Adam Possamai, & James T. Richardson, eds., *Legal pluralism and Shari’a law* (New York: Routledge, 2014); and Michael Buehler, *The politics of Shari’a law: Islamist activists and the state in democratizing Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[26] Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974).

[27] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 3–20.

[28] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 5 (n. 1).

[29] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 8 (italics in the original).

He also refutes the idea that it is only a scholar who has any use for an accurate and elaborate transliteration system.[30] He writes:

> To assume that the non-specialist can have no use for exact transliteration suggests condescension; for it implies that he will read only the one book on the subject, and so have no occasion to refer across from the usage of one book to that of another, nor need to straighten out the names he comes across.[31]

Hodgson also remarks on the pedagogical relationship between a scholar and a general reader. He asserts that rather than giving up the entire scholarly enterprise of transliteration just because general readers may not fully benefit from it, scholars should strive to perfect the enterprise, "set a good example and form better habits in their readers".[32]

However, what we are observing today is a cause for worry. The article has discussed many cases, most of them of high-profile academic publications, in which little to no regard has been paid to accurate Arabic-to-Latin transliteration. What is even more worrisome, this sloppiness has now seeped into the world of journalism as well. In 2016, a popular English-language newspaper in Pakistan published an article on the *mushā'ara* tradition (public recitation of poetry) in South Asia.[33] Almost all the instances in that article that required transliteration suffered a messy fate. The key word in the title and in the main text, *mushā'ara*, was written as "musha'era". Even if one gives into the fact that most people today pronounce either an (e) or an (i) after the *'ayn* ('), instead of an "a", what cannot be excused is the confusion between the *hamzah* (') and the *'ayn* ('). While referring to a famous Punjabi poet, the article spells his name wrongly as Mas'ood.[34] The same treatment is meted out to words like *sham'a* (flame), *misr'a*[35] (verse), and Rabi'a.[36] The Ka'bah was wrongly transliterated as Ka'aba. As in the case of the word *misr'a*, neither the *'ayn* nor the *hamzah* should appear right before the "a". In the case of the word *mu'allaqāt*, the article writes "muallaqaat". Neither the *'ayn* (correctly) nor the *hamzah* (wrongly) features in the transliteration of the word.

This is a disturbing trend. Many scholars and readers who understand the importance of exact and accurate transliteration are put off by the sight of erroneous transliterations in a work that claims to be either scholarly or rigorous; this reflects

[30] Many scholars in Islamic studies and other related fields have expressed the view that for those who know Arabic, transliteration is redundant, while for those who do not know Arabic, transliteration is useless. Messick has discussed at least three authors who share this view (see Messick, "Notes on Transliteration", 186–188). Add to this Fred Donner, who claims that "the general reader is confused or put off by them [diacritical marks], the specialist generally does not need them, and the publisher abhors them as cumbersome and costly" (Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), xvii).

[31] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 5 (n. 1).

[32] Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 5.

[33] Rauf Parekh, "A brief history of 'musha'era'," *Dawn* (Nov. 29, 2016), accessed on Dec. 20, 2016, url: http://www.dawn.com/news/1299275.

[34] The Punjabi poet himself spells his name as Anwar Masood (anglicized).

[35] The correct transliteration is *miṣra'*.

[36] The famous Sufi, Rābi'ah of Baṣrah.

badly on the author, the editor, and the publisher alike.[37] Transliteration should not be seen as either just a formality or an afterthought; as discussed above, it is a scholarly necessity that forms part of the substance of scholarship itself.

Authors, editors, and publishers can take steps to minimize transliteration errors in their publications. If a work with transliteration errors has ended up on a publisher's desk, chances are that the author of that work has been careless. Even then, the publisher compiling a list of all transliterated words in a separate file and sharing it with the author or the editor of the scholarly work for a second, focused look might not be a bad idea. If an author/editor were to look at a list of words only from the point of view of transliteration, chances are that s/he will catch many errors that might not have been in focus when interspersed within a larger text. Once such a list has been compiled, a resident-editor/house-editor with sufficient training in Arabic, Islamic, or Near Eastern Studies can take a detailed look at it to check for any errors or inconsistencies.

One of the best ways to deal with transliteration issues is to hire a specialist, even someone who is not on a full-time payroll and works from home. However, in the increasingly competitive world of academic and scholarly publishing, hiring a specialist, even on a part-time basis, might prove to be expensive and that in turn is likely to drive up the cost of the related work. The hiring of a freelance editor, even for transliteration alone, can be prohibitive for some publishers. Still, this option might work for those publishers that have continuous and sizeable publishing work in Arabic, Islamic, or Near Eastern Studies. There are academic and university presses that specialize in these fields. For them, hiring an advanced doctoral student in a relevant field for this task might serve the purpose without the publisher incurring much cost. Many competent doctoral students might be interested in this sort of work as it falls within their expertise. It does not take them much time and it will end up in some monetary remuneration for them. It will allow the publisher to have an expert set of eyes every time they are about to publish a work that contains Arabic words transliterated into the Roman script.

[37] Here are just some of the cases where authors commenting on other people's work and academics reviewing academic publications made it a point to write about mistakes and idiosyncrasies in transliteration: Erika Rummel, *The Case Against Johann Reuchlin: Religions and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 64 (n. 21); Talat S. Halman, *The Turkish Muse: Views and Reviews, 1960s–1990s*, ed. J. L. Warner (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 79; Alan Mikhail, "[Review of] *Millenial Landscape Change in Jordan*", *Agricultural History* 83.1 (2009): 113; G. A. Russell, "[Review of] *Science in the Medieval World*", *Library and Culture* 30.1 (1995): 102; Geoffrey Wheeler, "[Review of] *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia*", *The English Historical Review* 85.334 (1970): 199; George F. Hourani, "[Review of] *The Philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi*", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19.4 (1960): 300; Harry Munt, "[Review of] *People from the Desert*", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 103 (2013): 434; Sema'an I. Salem, "[Review of] *Medieval Agriculture and Islamic Science*", *Speculum* 71.1 (1996): 114; Morris C. Leikind, "[Review of] *Medieval and Renaissance Medicine*", *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 35.4 (1960): 325; Adnan F. Haydar, "[Review of] *When the Words Burn*", *Middle East Journal* 44.3 (1990): 529; Philip K. Hitti, "[Review of] *The Arabs in History*", *Speculum* 26.3 (1951): 522; Ousmane Kane, "[Review of] *Islamic Society in Practice*", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30.2 (1997): 367–368; Ann Elizabeth Mayer, "[Review of] *Unlawful Gain and Legitimate Profit in Islamic Law*", *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 21.2 (1987): 304.

Another viable option for organizations that publish in relevant fields is to have one or more of their editors get formal training in transliteration and other editorial issues.[38] Again, this option is viable only for those publishers that have a rigorous publication program in Islamic studies and related fields. Only for such publishers will a proper training program be of any sustained value. The case with journals is a bit different. Journals that focus on religion and Islamic and Near Eastern studies in general are much more careful in transliteration, even though they too are not completely flawless.[39] I think that this is because good journals have editors who are trained in transliteration. After all, the same academics and scholars write for journals who also write academic monographs and chapters. And many major publishers publish both books and journals.[40] It must then be the editors who make the actual difference.

A rather unorthodox way to make sure that the transliteration in a publication is accurate, is to simply follow the transliterated scheme of a credible dictionary. For instance, if there are Arabic words in a manuscript, one only has to open up a dictionary and see how the words have been spelled and transliterated. Then, instead of deciphering the pronunciation of the words and then transliterating them in light of another transliteration system, one can simply copy the relevant words in the dictionary into the publication. In other words, one can simply adopt the transliteration system of a credible dictionary for a given publication.

If none of the solutions discussed above turns out to be viable for a publisher, it is always better *not* to have a messed-up application of transliteration systems; instead, one should decide to work with a simplified system, or, better yet, with no sophisticated transliteration rules at all. The book *Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi*[41] provides an excellent model. In it the author has limited himself to a very basic set of transliteration rules. Other than the *'ayn* (') and the *hamzah* (')—and that too with limited use—the book does away with all transliteration rules. The same is the case with the book *Muhammad and his Believers*, in which the author writes:

[38] In 2015, the Oxford University Press (OUP) Pakistan arranged a training course for editors by Syed Nomanul Haq, a scholar of Islamic intellectual history and South Asian studies. A part of the course addressed issues in transliteration. There are even manuals that can be used for trainings. One such manual was compiled by a team at the Islamic Research Institute (IRI), the International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), in as early as 1986. See: Islamic Research Institute, *Workshop on Technical Editing* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1986).

[39] For instance: writing "Ishāq" instead of "Isḥāq", in Annemarie Schimmel, "Islamic Studies in Germany: A Historical Overview", *Islamic Studies* 49.3 (2010): 407; and writing "*Shari'a*/*Shari'ah*" instead of "*Shari'a*/*Shari'ah*", in W. M. Ballantyne, "The Shari'a: A Speech to the IBA Conference in Cairo, on Arab Comparative and Commercial Law, 15–18 February 1987", *Arab Law Quarterly* 2.1 (1987): 12; Ida Madieha bt. Abdul Ghani Azmi, "The Philosophy of Intellectual Property Rights over Ideas in Cyberspace: A Comparative Analysis between the Western Jurisprudence and the Shari'ah", *Arab Law Quarterly* 19.1/4 (2004): 191.

[40] The most obvious examples are Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and Brill, among many others.

[41] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi: Islam in Modern South Asia* (London: Oneworld, 2008).

> I have generally omitted diacritical marks when converting words from Arabic and other Near Eastern languages to Roman letters … The only exception is that I have retained the signs for *'ayn* (') and *hamza* (').[42]

If all else fails, this method, preferred by many authors, especially in books that are meant not just for specialist readers but also for non-specialist ones, is highly practical and avoids inaccuracies in transliteration.

Since transliteration is an important feature of published scholarship, especially in the humanities and the social sciences, authors, editors, and publishers should make every effort to use established transliteration systems with accuracy and consistency. However, if either an author, or an editor, or a publisher decides to do away with rigorous transliteration, then, as a general rule, it is always better to use no transliteration system at all than to invest time and effort into something that turns out to be inconsistent and confusing at best.

[42] Donner, *Muhammad and his Believers*, v.